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(1) Editorial: Hatoyama administration must change its U.S. policy

NIKKEI (Page2) (Full)
September 2, 2009

We have strong concerns about the "Hatoyama administration's" foreign policy, especially about its relationship with the United States. If the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) sticks to its opposition-party stance, our concerns will become a reality. (A proverb says the wise adapt themselves to changed circumstances). (Like this proverb), it is inevitable for the Hatoyama administration to adapt itself to the changed circumstances, and we expect that.

The maxim is often used to mean changing an attitude with no principles, but its original meaning is different. According to the Kojien Japanese dictionary, it comes from the Book of Changes (one of the oldest of the Chinese classic texts) and means that when there is a mistake, a wise man swiftly corrects it and preserves his honor.

Four concerns about Japan-U.S. relations

U.S. President Barack Obama, who advocated change, too, has shifted from the election mode to the governing mode immediately after assuming office. Such was natural. During the campaign period for the Aug. 30 House of Representatives election, we pointed out that

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the DPJ's policies were too ambiguous. In its manifesto (campaign pledges), the DPJ vowed to "build a close and equal Japan-U.S. alliance." But the meaning of a "close" and "equal" relationship was unclear.

The DPJ did not change its ambiguous policy line. Was it a strategy that factored in a sudden change after the election? Shifting its deliberately vague policy course to a pragmatic policy line is not a betrayal of voters. It is irresponsible to opt for continuing adhering to its opposition-party policies that are certain to rock Japan-U.S. relations and bring instability to Northeast Asia.

Of the policies taken by the DPJ when it was an opposition party, there are at least four problems that will adversely affect Japan-U.S. relations.

First is its opposition to the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. Second is its call for the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to be moved out of Okinawa, Third is its opposition to Japan's host-nation support for the costs of stationing U.S. forces in Japan, which is commonly referred to as the "sympathy budget" (in Japan). Fourth is that it is calling for a revision of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).

The legal basis for the refueling mission in the Indian Ocean will expire next January. DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama, who is certain to become the new prime minister, has declared that his administration will not extend the mission. He is considering a means of cooperation other than refueling.

What does he have in mind? Workers of such offices as the Foreign Ministry and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) are already working arduously in Afghanistan for economic cooperation.

Is Japan going to send Ground Self-Defense Force troops to Afghanistan? The U.S. and European countries, which have dispatched ground troops there, have lost many lives. Is it advisable to terminate the refueling mission, which is safer than sending ground troops and has reportedly earned high marks from other countries?

Relocating Futenma airfield outside Okinawa will not be easy either. It might be a different story if there is a right place in such areas as Hokkaido, Iwate, and Mie prefectures where DPJ heavyweights come from. If renegotiations are held without it (an alternative

place) 13 years after the 1996 agreement, the danger of Futenma Air Station surrounded by residential areas will continue to exist semi-permanently.

Proposing talks on revisions to the SOFA and the "sympathy budget" seems less harmful than these options to Japan-U.S. relations. But it requires a solution for talks with no way out. To begin with, the two countries cannot afford to spend time on them. The reason is because there are many priority issues that require the strategic responses of Japan and the United States, such as the North Korean nuclear issue and China's growing position.

The DPJ still thinks bilateral talks are necessary in order to build an equal Japan-U.S. alliance. We think a change to the Japanese government's interpretation of the right to collective self-defense will ensure a close and equal bilateral relationship.

That is what the United States also wants to see. The stage for

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substantial talks on a SOFA revision will be set once the DPJ shifts its policy, the government changes its interpretation of the right to collective self-defense, and a new Japan-U.S. defense cooperation framework is established.

What is more serious than the four points is DPJ Secretary General Katsuya Okada's repeated statement urging the United States to abandon the preemptive use of nuclear weapons. Okada is regarded as a candidate for the foreign portfolio. At this point, his proposal is more harmful to Japan's security than to Japan-U.S. relations.

Prohibition of preemptive use of nuclear weapons counterproductive

True, in relations between countries like the United States and Russia that are equally matched in terms of nuclear warheads and are aware that they will lose much in a nuclear attack, nuclear deterrence is maintained by means of second attack capability rather than by a preemptive strike. If the United States declares that it will attack Moscow, Russia will launch a second attack in several minutes and annihilate New York. The two sides will suffer tremendous losses. That is why they do not launch a nuclear attack. This is the logic of nuclear deterrence.

The logic does not work with countries like North Korea which is not certain what it will lose. Should North Korea declare that it will make a nuclear attack on Tokyo and if the United States is bound by the rule of not using nuclear weapons preemptively, the United States will simply warn, "If Tokyo is annihilated, Pyongyang will be annihilated in several minutes." Even though the conventional forces of the United States and Japan are greater than those of North Korea, can Japan feel a sense of security under such circumstances?

If North Korea declares an attack on Tokyo, Japan cannot feel secure unless the United States is expected to make a preemptive strike. If the United States declares that it will not use nuclear weapons preemptively, nuclear proliferation to such countries as North Korea and terrorists might occur and might enliven those who are calling for Japan to go nuclear, as well.

China has declared a "no first use policy." But the country has not allowed verifying whether or not its weapons actually deployed fit that declaration. Abandonment of the preemptive use of weapons actually does not mean arms reduction.

(2) Security policy obstacle to DPJ effort to form coalition;
Differences with SDP on refueling mission in Indian Ocean

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Slightly abridged)
September 2, 2009

Yoichi Takeuchi, political reporter

The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and the People's New Party (PNP) have begun discussions on forming a coalition government. The biggest problem for the official consultations by their secretaries general and policy officers

starting this week will be whether they can narrow their gap on foreign and security policies. The role of the SDP and the PNP in the system of unified policymaking that the DPJ envisions will also be a key issue.

Four common policies

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The three parties had agreed on a number of common policies in mid-August, before the House of Representatives election, namely: (1) maintaining the current consumption tax rate; (2) drastic review of the postal businesses; (3) support for child rearing; and (4) drastic revision of the temporary worker placement law. The coalition talks will be based on these common policies.

These common policies consist of the "major policies that (the three parties) could agree on" (in the words of a senior DPJ official), but they do not include foreign and security policies on which the DPJ and the SDP do not see eye to eye. While the common policies might have worked fine for an alliance of opposition parties, foreign and security policies cannot possibly be shelved for a coalition government.

The main sticking point is until when should the refueling mission of the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) in the Indian Ocean continue.

The DPJ had shifted to a policy of condoning the continuation of the mission for the time being during the election campaign. On the other hand, SDP Chairperson Mizuho Fukushima insisted even during her news conference after the election that, "We will not compromise on issues relating to peace. This will be an important issue for discussion," maintaining the party's position of demanding the immediate withdrawal of the MSDF.

There are also subtle differences among the three parties on child allowances, which the DPJ regards as its top priority policy in the first year of the administration. The DPJ and the SDP differ on the appropriate amount of allowances, while the PNP's Kamei advocates setting requirements based on the parents' income.

The three parties can choose to shelve the details of policies in order to reach agreement before the new prime minister is elected on September 16. However, this will mean that coordination within the coalition will take time each time a policy decision is to be made.

On top of specific policy issues, the DPJ also differs with the SDP and the PNP on the mechanism for policy coordination.

Fukushima and Kamei agreed on the need to create a permanent body for policy coordination among the ruling coalition parties at their meeting on September 1.

Arena for making presence felt

Compared to the DPJ, which has won over 300 seats in the Lower House, the SDP and the PNP are very junior partners. They will have only one minister each in the cabinet at most. Therefore, it will be difficult for them to have their voices heard on all policies. That is why there is a need for an "arena" for them to influence the "Hatoyama administration" from the outside and make their party's presence felt.

What the SDP has in mind is the creation of something similar to the meeting of ruling party policy officers under the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)-New Komeito administration. Under the LDP-New Komeito regime, this meeting made decisions on policy and the government simply confirmed them. A senior SDP official remarked: "The LDP policymaking system was quite sophisticated. The system of

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coordinating between each party's policy research organ under the coalition government was straightforward."

Lessons learned from dual structure

However, this contradicts the DPJ's pledge in its manifesto to have the cabinet make all policy decisions. Hatoyama has told Kamei that, "We would like to avoid dual policymaking by the government and the party as much as possible." This is a policy based on the experience of the Hosokawa cabinet, where powerful Diet members controlled policymaking from outside the cabinet under a "dual power structure."

Nevertheless, the DPJ will not be able to force the unification of the government and the ruling parties on its coalition partners. For this reason, the party is thinking of a mechanism for the DPJ secretary general to heed the demands of the SDP and the PNP.

If a permanent body is created for this purpose, an organ exerting strong influence on the cabinet from the outside may come into existence, depending on how the DPJ secretary general handles this process. The mechanism for policy coordination may emerge as a tricky question in the coalition talks since this is also related to appointments under the Hatoyama administration.

(3) Poll: Small number of people support DPJ's campaign platform; 31 PERCENT favor child-care allowance plan, 20 PERCENT approve toll free highways

ASAHI (Page 3) (Full)
September 2, 2009

The Asahi Shimbun has learned through a nationwide public opinion survey that while people have high hopes for a government led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), they are also looking carefully at the specific campaign pledges of the party.

When pollees were asked if they supported the DPJ's plan to abolish tax income exemptions for spouses, instead of providing 26,000 yen per month for each child, 31 PERCENT agreed with the plan but 49 PERCENT disagreed. Of those who voted for the DPJ in the proportional representation segment of the ballot, 37 PERCENT disapproved (43 PERCENT approved). Of those who voted for other political parties, 50 to 60 PERCENT opposed the idea.

Regarding a DPJ campaign pledge to make all highway tolls free and allot tax money to repay the debts, as many as 65 PERCENT were critical, while only 20 PERCENT approved. Of those who voted for the DPJ, 56 PERCENT disapproved. When Asahi conducted a poll on these two pledges before the start of the official campaign for the general election, 33 PERCENT approved of the plan to introduce a child-care allowance, while 55 PERCENT did not approve of it. As for the plan to remove all highway tolls, 23 PERCENT gave positive evaluations and 67 PERCENT did not approve of it. Regardless of the DPJ's publicity on its manifesto during the election campaigning, the features indicate that the party's campaign pledges were not well understood by voters. When respondents were asked if they thought the major reason for the DPJ's victory was because voters supported its manifesto, 38 PERCENT answered "yes," while 52 PERCENT said "no." It is hard to say that the DPJ's manifesto received a "seal of approval." How the DPJ will explain the significance of its policy platform to the public will be a major

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challenge for the party.

Some respondents have high expectations for the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which suffered an overwhelming defeat in the general election. Seventy-six percent said that they wanted the LDP to regain power. Of those who voted for the DPJ in the proportional representation section of the ballot, 76 PERCENT answered that they wanted the LDP to recover.

Meanwhile, about a half of those who voted for the LDP in the election this time viewed the change of government positively. This indicates that many LDP supporters think that the present LDP had no choice but to be defeated in the election. One of the LDP's challenges is how it will transform itself.

(4) Change of government (Part 2): "Transition team" plan fizzles out; Prime-minister-led decision-making system already stumbles

SANKEI (Page3) (Abridged)
September 1, 2009

Mashiho Akaji

On the morning of Aug. 31, the day after the House of Representatives election, Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Yukio Hatoyama gave a press interview at his home in Tokyo's Denenchofu area.

Hatoyama said: "It has taken a long time, but we have at last reached the starting line. We are now in a position to create a new kind of politics. I am filled with deep emotion."

Hatoyama's words apparently came from his strong emotions regarding the rocky road from the launch of the DPJ 13 years ago to the eve of the establishment of a DPJ administration.

Hatoyama, who is certain to become the next prime minister, will soon be able to put his visions into action. But his words and actions have been inconsistent.

The night before, Hatoyama discussed steps for the transfer of power with DPJ executives at the party's vote-counting center in Tokyo's Roppongi district. "We will change the political system itself and implement our manifesto (campaign pledges)," Hatoyama said before Deputy Presidents Naoto Kan and Ichiro Ozawa, Secretary General Katsuya Okada, and other DPJ executives, adding, "We will have to conduct politics from the viewpoint of the general public."

Hatoyama also indicated that he will decide the new cabinet lineup in one stroke after the prime ministerial election, astonishing the DPJ executives. It was a de facto announcement by Hatoyama to drop a plan to set up a transition team composed of prospective cabinet ministers tasked with conducting talks for launching a coalition government with other parties. Instead, the three top DPJ executives including Ozawa will make preparations for the new administration. Hatoyama's idea of creating a prime minister-led decision-making system has already stumbled.

"On the night of Aug. 30, I advised Mr. Hatoyama to set up a transition team to give the impression that the DPJ is moving toward establishing the new administration," a Hatoyama aide said incredulously. "Mr. Hatoyama should have given some thought to it."

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"It is necessary to replace old things with new things smoothly," Hatoyama said to party executives. Hatoyama did not elaborate on this comment.

Hatoyama is believed to have given up on setting up a transition team composed of a handful of prospective cabinet ministers so as not to cause confusion and discontent in the party. He also seems to have decided to do away with a transition team in deference to the Ozawa side which is displeased with the fact that a personnel plan was trumpeted before the election.

As the leader, it is counterproductive to come across as indecisive and stalling for the sake of keeping harmony in the party and maintaining momentum.

Hatoyama held a meeting with Ozawa, Kan, and another Deputy President, Azuma Koshiishi, at party headquarters at around noon yesterday. They simply decided to swiftly hold consultative meetings with various factions to discuss the convocation of the next special Diet session for the election of the new prime minister.

The obscurity and inconsistency of Hatoyama's visions and policies have often been pointed out.

On July 15 Hatoyama indicated his intention to hold talks with the

United States to remove the principle of not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan from the three non-nuclear principles after the DPJ takes power. In 2005 Hatoyama released his own proposal for constitutional amendment that did not touch on the principle of not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan.

Hatoyama's statement has gone through numerous transformations, as seen in the fact that drawing a strong objection from the Social Democratic Party, the DPJ's possible coalition partner, he announced a plan to legislate the three non-nuclear principles.

In the DPJ leadership race in May, Hatoyama pledged to realize a "fraternal society," a slogan advocated by his grandfather, the late Prime Minister Ichiro Hatoyama. Hatoyama also advocates "fraternal diplomacy" whereby Japan interacts amicably with societies that hold widely different values. What "fraternity" specifically means remains unclear, however.

In June a reporter asked Hatoyama, "Does fraternity mean 'humanity' or 'brotherly love'?" Hatoyama replied: "It is closer to 'humanity.' I will make efforts to publicize both."

Following the DPJ's landslide victory, Hatoyama held news conferences on the night of Aug. 30 and before dawn of Aug. 31 in which he refrained from mentioning "fraternity." "I like using the word 'fraternity,' but it is not just wishful thinking," Hatoyama replied to a question from a reporter on Aug. 31.

The DPJ has achieved a landslide victory facilitated by the fierce criticism and hatred of the LDP. Like Hatoyama's inconsistent words, a tailwind could turn into an adverse wind at any time.

(5) Column: "The collapse of 'LDP-style Japan': Time to search for a new mode of 'stability'"

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NIKKEI (Page 25) (Slightly abridged)
September 2, 2009

Takashi Mikuriya, professor at the University of Tokyo

How should we look at the recent election, where the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) won a landslide victory, capturing 308 seats in the House of Representatives? Some people believe that a 2009 regime has replaced the 1955 political regime, but this author thinks that it is premature to say that a new system is now in place.

It is also said that the era of a full-fledged two-party system has come after this election to choose an administration. For sure, dramatic changes like in the present case are possible under the single-seat constituency system, and if the DPJ makes policy mistakes, it will be forced out of power. In that sense, it would appear that a two-party system has begun. However, this may not be the case either.

The above is evident through an analysis of the factors behind the DPJ's overwhelming victory.

The DPJ had indeed improved its ability to become the alternative. However, not all voters who voted for the DPJ did so because they think the DPJ is good. This election was an election to purge the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The election outcome should be regarded as the result of widespread discontent with the LDP, which has changed its president once every year for the past few years and which repeatedly delayed the dissolution of the Diet in an opportunistic manner, as well as the people's desire to do away with such a situation.

A DPJ administration will not collapse that easily, and the move from a LDP administration to a DPJ one is, in a sense, inevitable. From a longer term point of view, this reflects the accumulated long years of distrust of the LDP's ways since it engineered an immediate comeback to power by co-opting the then Japan Socialist Party (JSP) after going into opposition briefly with the forming of the Morihiro

Hosokawa administration in 1993. The people were fed up with the LDP's unscrupulous maneuvering to cling to power by co-opting the JSP at first, then the Liberal Party, followed by the New Komeito.

The significance of the LDP's loss of power this time may not be limited to the political level. This may trigger the collapse of everything that is LDP-style in Japanese systems. For example, the business sector. If corporate donations are really going to be abolished, the existence of the economic organizations in their present form will lose its meaning because individual companies can now decide and take their own stance in interacting with the political authorities.

The same is true with the bureaucracy. The bureaucratic systems that built a special relationship with the LDP over the years have come to a dead end. It will be impossible to retain the present form of relationship under a DPJ administration.

Since the DPJ's victory is a premonition of the collapse of all the old social systems in Japan, even if the DPJ makes certain mistakes, there is no guarantee that the LDP will be the alternative after four years. That is, it is fully possible that the collapse of everything that is LDP-style may force the LDP to change dramatically and ultimately split into several political parties

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with new names which will become the rival force to the DPJ. This is the main difference from the time of the Hosokawa administration in 1993.

Was this election really an election based on manifestos (campaign pledges), as the media would claim?

Actually, this is also not true. The problem is not just with the manifestos per se - that the policies were not backed by funding and that they were incoherent.

The more important thing is that the existence of the LDP itself is incompatible with manifestos. Junichiro Koizumi, who knew this intuitively, hated manifestos. The one and only reason for this is because through its long years of being the ruling party, the LDP had sought a blanket mandate from the people. The LDP was no good at prioritizing specific policies.

The LDP won a "blanket mandate" from the people through an election and was able to implement with competence even contradictory policies after the election through the actions of its politicians. It then sought another blanket mandate from the people in the next election, and had been operating with such a cycle.

This system worked best in an era of economic growth, when the politicians and bureaucrats worked in perfect harmony. However, it became difficult to get a blanket mandate from the people during a time of economic recession. This is because: (1) the size of the pie was not increasing; and (2) there was a growing need to prioritize in the distribution of the pie.

Then along came the DPJ as the alternative. The DPJ, which had been an opposition party throughout the over 10 years of its existence, had a great variety of policy ideas and was good at criticizing current policies. To be sure, the entire lineup of its policies were pie in the sky, but through long years of criticizing the LDP, it had acquired the ability to debate certain issues effectively - for example, pensions, environmental issues, and the so-called revenue source issue.

In other words, the DPJ, while unable to come up with systematic policies, succeeded in drawing up a manifesto within the bounds of policies under a limited mandate.

The DPJ's proposals to pay out child allowances or make high school education and expressways free are criticized by some as pork barrels, but for the DPJ, they are consistent with its criticism of the LDP and the bureaucratic systems. The LDP would only pay out such subsidies indirectly, and intermediary exploitation and organizations accepting retired bureaucrats under the practice of

amakudari (golden parachute) are allowed to come into the picture.

The DPJ has chosen to make payments directly, and this is an indication of its desire not to allow intermediary exploitation and the intervention of amakudari bodies.

As symbolized by the above, there is a decisive difference in the DPJ's and the LDP's payouts. This difference will expand even more in politics from now on. The DPJ's policy direction of breaking away from bureaucratic control will deal a direct blow to the old systems and this will produce considerable friction.

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However, such friction will not immediately mean a return to the LDP. This is because basically, the nature of bureaucrats is such that they will normally obey the administration if the administration is stable. Furthermore, if the DPJ succeeds in building a new relationship with the bureaucracy that is different from that of the LDP, a different form of relationship of tension will be born with the bureaucrats. This will probably enrich the decision-making process in this country.

Then, how far ahead should the DPJ look when conducting its politics?

The DPJ will probably be able to serve out its full four-year term. If it succeeds in compiling the budget for three years, it will certainly be able to implement many of the party's new policies. However, the people are impatient. They will not be patient enough to just sit back and wait for four years. Therefore, it is necessary to imbue a sense of security that the DPJ administration will surely do something at an early stage. It is necessary to draft a road map for the 100 days until the end of December, carry out this plan in haste, and complete the implementation of a number of showpiece policies - such as reshuffling the budget or building a new Japan-U.S. relationship - during this period. With some tangible results, the people will continue to trust the DPJ administration.

On the other hand, the regeneration of the LDP as an opposition party will be tough, particularly in this case. Since all four prime ministers who served in the 21st Century still remain in the party, they will make reform difficult to achieve. This is because they are only used to looking at political parties from their experience as a ruling party. There can be no regeneration of the LDP unless it comes to comprehend the essence of a true opposition party.

The media will also be impatient. If the DPJ is unable to produce results and appears to be incompetent, they will begin to criticize the administration in no time. However, it is natural for a party that is in power for the first time to fumble. Unless some allowance is given for this fact, no administration can survive for long. It is easy to destroy something, but it is extremely hard to build something from scratch. The first 100 days of an administration should be its honeymoon with the media, as is the case in the U.S. For now, the media should be kind to the new administration.

(6) North Korea a higher priority than striving for a nuclear-free Northeast Asia

ASAHI (Page 5) (Full)
August 31, 2009

Susan Burk, the Special Representative in charge of nuclear nonproliferation for the State Department under the Obama administration, visited Japan to attend a UN arms reduction conference in Niigata, which ended on the August 28. In an interview with the Asahi Shimbun she discussed the policy of the Obama administration, which has called for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and the U.S.-Japan relationship.

(Interviewer: Hiroyuki Maekawa)

Q: The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be held in May of next year. Some have said that the atomic energy agreement the Bush

administration concluded in 2008 with India, which is not a party to the treaty, contradicts the implementation of the treaty framework.

Burk: The Review Conference must strike a balance between the NPT's three pillars: nuclear disarmament, nonproliferation, and the peaceful use of nuclear power. Rather than attempting to separate these we would like to focus on areas in which they can be combined.

The Obama administration is also promoting the U.S.-India Nuclear Pact. It would like to realize cooperation in the civilian sphere. That rebuts the view that there is a contradiction with the treaty framework. We are prepared to address questions at The Review Conference.

Q: (What are your thoughts on) the North Korea problem?

Burk: I believe that diplomacy, in the broad sense, offers the best strategy. We should pursue all bilateral and multilateral avenues including the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the Six-Party Talks. We should not give up.

Q: Japan is an ally under the protection of the U.S.'s nuclear umbrella. How can a balance between nuclear disarmament and deterrence be achieved?

Burk: In his speech in Prague the President clearly said that as long as nuclear weapons exist, we should preserve the power of deterrence while taking concrete steps toward a world without nuclear arms.

The role, composition, and number of nuclear weapons are now under examination as part of the "nuclear strategy review" to be submitted to congress by next February. Expanded deterrence ("the nuclear umbrella") is the core issue. While maintaining the long-term goal of eliminating nuclear weapons, we will aim to reduce the role of nuclear arms.

Q: Japan's DPJ is advocating a "Nuclear Free Zone in Northeast Asia" including North Korea.

Burk: I believe that resolution of the North Korea problem is the priority. Countries in the region should first devote their energy to North Korea."

(7) Change of government and Okinawa: Governor seeks ways to approach DPJ

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 1 & 2) (Full)
September 1, 2009

When the votes were being counted on the night of the Aug. 30 House of Representatives election, instant reporting on election returns was showing the Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ) advantage and the successful candidates in Okinawa Prefecture. Yoshiyuki Uehara, director of the Okinawa Governor's Executive Office, who was watching the counting of votes on television, heard his cell-phone ring. It was a call from DPJ Okinawa Prefectural Federation Policy Research Committee Chairman Yoshiyuki Uesato. He told Uehara: "I want to meet the governor as early as Aug. 31. I will bring along the representatives of the (Okinawa) No. 3 and 4 districts." Uesato sounded out Uehara on a talk with the governor. Uehara, who just watched television reporting the losses of all candidates on the

Liberal Democratic Party's and New Komeito's tickets, whom the governor supported, responded after a short interval: "How about Sept. 1?"

All eyes are now focused on how the DPJ, which promises to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station out of Okinawa to somewhere overseas, will deal with the Futenma relocation issue after it takes the reins of government. The DPJ has begun looking

for a way to coordinate its policies with the Okinawa prefectural government, while taking a stance of paying close attention to the response of the prefecture and Nago City, which assent to the relocation of Futenma to a location elsewhere on the island prefecture.

On Aug. 31, Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima emphasized before reporters his intention to listen to the views of a DPJ government, noting: "The Defense Ministry and the central government are responsible for (Futenma relocation)." The governor had stated that he would go along with the relocation of Futenma in Okinawa, saying: "The relocation of the base somewhere within the prefecture is a realistic choice." However, Nakaima's statement yesterday seemed to sound as if he would look into the DPJ's seriousness regarding the relocation of Futenma out of Okinawa.

Amid strong winds blowing in favor of the inauguration of a DPJ-led government, opposition candidates won in all single-seat district races and the LDP, which Nakaima backed, lost its Lower House seats in Okinawa. The balance of power has completely changed after the general election, which will have a great impact on a package of promotional measures for Okinawa, including one to reduce Okinawa's excessive burden of U.S. military bases, as well as an Okinawa promotional plan. In preparation for the Okinawa gubernatorial election next year, the political situation in the prefecture will begin to move forward. The newspaper examined closely the impact of a change of government that is spreading across the prefecture.

"The governor is wavering in his judgment," said a senior Okinawa government official. What the official meant is that Nakaima is wavering between his conventional policy of relocating Futenma to somewhere in the prefecture and relocating it out of Okinawa, although his position of relocating it out of Okinawa is not clear at present.

The DPJ and the Okinawa government have already started seeking ways to coordinate views. Fearing that his government lacks its own channels of communication to the DPJ, Nakaima instructed a senior prefectural government official at a meeting to secretly create a point of contact for dialogue with the DPJ.

The governor told the senior official:

"Although I and the deputy governor are taking the lead (in backing the LDP and New Komeito candidates), I want the administration side to build communication channels to the DPJ."

LDP Okinawa Prefectural Federation Chairman Kosuke Gushi, who supports Nakaima, referring to a review of the relocation of Futenma to a location elsewhere on the island prefecture, emphasized the governor's firm position, saying:

"The governor will say to the new administration that there is no one who will reject the relocation of the base out of the prefecture

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if it is realized. Please make this request (to the U.S. side) in a strong manner. The Okinawa government will carefully observe developments for the time being. He will not return the negotiations to the drawing board."

When the DPJ Okinawa Prefectural Federation sought an exchange of views with the governor before the Aug. 30 general election, the LDP Okinawa chapter reacted negatively to it. After the election, too, the LDP chapter opposed a meeting between the governor and the DPJ chapter. Also Tomonori Itosu, representative of the New Komeito Okinawa chapter, asserted that there would be no change in the governor's policy.

Some have contended that there is a slight difference in the positions of DPJ headquarters and the Okinawa chapter over the Futenma relocation plan. DPJ Okinawa Prefectural Federation Secretary General Yasuhiro Aragaki said: "I actually don't think it will be easy to resolve this issue." He also added:

"It remains to be seen what kind of policies Nago City and Okinawa

Prefecture can lay down after the DPJ assumes the political helm. If Okinawa residents fail to come up with a single policy that goes beyond political affiliations, it will be difficult for the central government to conclude negotiations with the U.S."

Aragaki's perception is that it is indispensable for the prefecture and city to line up in favor of the relocation of the base out of Okinawa.

On Aug. 30 the prefectural government received a phone call from a senior Nago City official asking for a meeting early in the morning. The prefectural side immediately accepted the request. A senior prefectural government official grumbled: "What we must do first is to exchange views with Nago City."

(8) Nago citizens harbor mixed feelings of hope and anxiety on switch in power to DPJ that calls for relocating Futenma base outside Okinawa

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 25) (Full)
September 2, 2009

A new government led by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which has said it will aim to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station outside Okinawa Prefecture, will soon be inaugurated. With this new development, citizens' groups opposed to the plan to transfer the air base within Okinawa have actively carried out protest campaigns, holding gatherings calling for dropping the Futenma transfer plan. Meanwhile, residents in Henoko district of Nago City - the planned construction site for the alternative facility - are harboring mixed feelings, as one resident grumbled: "Actually, it is desirable for the base not to move here, but we also have to think about our lives." People in the prefecture are paying close attention to what approach the new administration will take in resolving the Futenma relocation issue.

(Nago)

All the five lawmakers elected from Okinawa Prefecture in the latest House of Representatives election have expressed their opposition to the planned transfer of the Futenma Air Station in Ginowan to Henoko district in Nago. Focusing on this fact, one resident in Henoko

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said: "I think the Futenma plan will remain unchanged." Another resident remarked with irritation: "We have been confused by the government's repeated policy switches." Meanwhile, concerned Nago government officials remain cautious, with one official saying: "We would like to intently watch how the situation will develop from now on."

Hiroshi Omine, 61, who is unemployed and lives in Henoko, said: "I think the relocation plan will remain unchanged even under the new government. I hope the government will swiftly push ahead with the plan." But he added: "Honestly speaking, if asked, I would say it is desirable for us to see the base not moved here. But the question of where the air base should go will be left unresolved. This issue will also have an impact on our livelihoods."

Konomi (TN: phonetic) Eda, 60, a cook, voiced his content with the government for its repeated changes in the relocation plan, saying: "I do not mind whether the base is located here or not as long as I can maintain my current living standards, but now that preparations for construction work are moving ahead steadily, it might be too late for the government to suggest reviewing the plan. I feel we are being pushed around by the government's repeated policy switches. If the plan goes back to square one, citizens will be thoroughly disgusted. The government should come up with a definite decision on whether to carry it out or not because we will have to accept the decision."

Takako Shinohara, 46, who joined a sit-down strike, commented: "It is a good chance for the plan to be withdrawn now, and such a possibility is now looming large. It is not correct to think that the voters have played out their roles with the change of government. It is important for the voters to carefully watch moves

by the government."

Kushi Ward head Kiyotaka Higa is taking a wait-and-see attitude, saying: "The Kube No.3 district did not try to host the base, and it would be better not to accept the base. Even so, I am concerned about what will be of the ongoing sewer project and economic stimulus measures. We will have no choice but to watch the situation intently."

Nago Vice Mayor Bunshin Suematsu indicated a cautious view, remarking: "The government has not proposed moving the base outside the prefecture, and the new government has yet to be inaugurated. We cannot give a reply under the current situation." Chairman Morihide Okido of the Nago Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chairman said: "The government and the U.S. will discuss the matter from now on, so I would like to keep an eye on the future development of the negotiations."

(9) Talks between Okinawa governor and DPJ Okinawa chapter:
Behind-the-scenes moves becoming active; Okinawa Prefecture, Nago City, Defense Ministry begin coordination

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 2) (Full)
September 2, 2009

The Okinawa prefectural government suddenly came alive on Sept. 1, when the impact of the change in government due to the Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ) crushing victory in the Lower House election was still being felt. Officials of the DPJ's Okinawa chapter met with Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima for the first time after the

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election. They urged the governor to agree with the DPJ's policy of transferring the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station outside Okinawa Prefecture or Japan. Officials from the Okinawa Defense Bureau, an outpost in Okinawa Prefecture of the Defense Ministry, and Nago City and former prefectural government officials were also seen on the same floor around the same time. Amid attention being focused on the new administration's Futenma relocation policy, officials have begun sounding out each other's true motives.

Nago Mayor Yoshikazu Shimabukuro and Deputy Mayor Bunshin Suematsu were in the governor's office right after his meeting with the DPJ's local leaders. Their meeting focused on the talks between the governor and the DPJ's local leaders. They discussed the timetable until the new administration is launched and vowed to continue to exchange information. The governor said: "Even if we say this and that, there is nothing we can do about it. All we can do is just wait and see for a while."

Governor remains noncommittal

The talks between DPJ Okinawa leaders and the governor started, with a pack of reporters inundating. Local DPJ leader Shokichi Kina said straightforward: "You are all keeping a close watch on the Futenma issue, aren't you? It would be most ideal if the base is not built in Henoko and if the Futenma Air Station is returned. In that respect, we have the same opinion, don't we?"

The governor responded: "I don't understand what you mean. First of all, I would like to hear what the DPJ intends to do." Kina tried to get a commitment from the governor, saying, "The best option for Okinawa is to relocate Futenma airfield 'outside Okinawa Prefecture,' isn't it?" The governor avoided giving his word, saying, "We need to hold more talks."

Okinawa prefectural officials are concerned over whether the DPJ's local chapter is really in agreement with its headquarters. The governor repeatedly asked, "What is Tokyo saying?" Secretary General Yasuhiro Aragaki became impatient and tried to persuade him, saying: "What is important is not the policy of our party's headquarters in Tokyo but is that Okinawa should back up the new administration in its talks with the U.S. The new administration is saying that it will make the best possible choice for Okinawa. Both Okinawa Prefecture and Nago City should fasten hopes on that." Their talks ended in failure. The governor wound up the talks, saying, "I see

what you mean." The governor raised a question to reporters about the party headquarters' stance interpreted by the local chapter and said, "I cannot figure out some of their explanations that way."

Secret visitor

Okinawa Defense Bureau Director General Ro Manabe visited Yoshiyuki Uehara, chief of the governor's office, on the morning of the 1st prior to the meeting between DPJ local chapter officials and the governor. They exchanged views for over an hour, including how to respond to the DPJ administration. After the meeting, Manabe said, "We exchanged views about our common concerns." Uehara said that there would be no change in the prefecture's previous stance of approving the transfer of Futenma airfield's functions within the prefecture. He also said that the prefectural government will take a wait-and-see attitude regarding what the DPJ administration will do."

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Officials from the Defense Ministry's Okinawa bureau were not the only visitors to the prefectural government office. Reiji Fumoto, a former chief of the governor's office and now an advisor to Nago City's municipal government on base issues, was also one of the visitors that day. By curious coincidence, Fumoto discussed future measures on the Futenma issue with Uehara, whom Fumoto has known, around the same time when the Nago mayor was meeting with the governor. Though the DPJ has yet to decide on a concrete policy on the transfer of Futenma airfield, behind-the-scenes moves, involving the prefectural government, are already becoming active.

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